



Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, March 25, 2020
Virtual meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Board Attendance

(P) Kyle Allison, Andy Alligators
(P) Tarasina Compagni, Benvenuti's
(P) Drew Gaschler, OU Athletics
(P) Steve Gillis, NYSA
(P) Angelia Green, The Chickasaw Nation
(P) Helen Green, OU Public Affairs
(P) Lee Hall, City Council
(A) Maureen Hammond, NEDC

(P) Jerry M. Hatter, Balfour of Norman
(P) Mandy Haws, Sooner Bowling
(A) Brenda Hall, City of Norman
(P) James Howard, Baked Bear
(P) Scott Kovalick, Embassy Hotel
(A) Alesha Leemaster, Norman Public Schools
(A) Scott Martin, Chamber of Commerce
(P) Mark Milsap, Holmberg House
(A) Bree Montoya, Norman Arts Council
(P) Amish Zaver, Comfort Inn

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 11:34 a.m. Attendees were logged into Zoom for the virtual meeting.

Minutes

Minutes from February meeting were presented. Milsap moved to approve the minutes, Green made the second for the motion. Motion was approved.

Finance Report

Schemm presented the financials via screen share. He showed the present cash position, balance of the reserves and money market account, more than \$300K. The biggest expense of February was the final payment to Sooner Sports Properties for the fiscal year. Before the interruptions because of the pandemic, the financial position was solid. Hatter moved to approve the financial statement, Gillis seconded the motion, the measure passed.

As part of the financial discussion, Schemm requested a board vote to loosen the restrictions to allow for digital approvals and checks by Haws and/or Milsap while the mayor's shelter-at-home order is in place. Howard made the motion to approve the short-term digital approval process, Hatter made the second and the motion carried.

FY20 Budget adjustment

Anthony Francisco with the City of Norman revised the monthly hotel/motel tax forecast figures for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020 to be reduced. He presented an option for VisitNorman to receive \$44K in bulk and forgo a June payment which Schemm suggested. Schemm also said that the national forecast is for the travel sector to rebound slowly. His plan is to plan for the worst and hope for the best. He will be planning to apply for an SBA loan/relief package and will be looking at options. Howard approved that plan with a second by Green; motion approved by the board.

Pandemic discussions

Schemm shared that according to a Destinations International webinar, 6 million jobs are estimated to have been lost in the travel and tourism sector along with \$400B in direct travel spending lost to date. VisitNorman may be able to tap into funds from the package that has been passed by Congress and the

president. Allison, a small business owner, shared that he has painstakingly filled out an application that it was difficult to complete (including waking up at 2 a.m. to see if web traffic would allow for an easier process) but that he was able to submit. He has been told it would 2-3 week for approvals and disbursements. Hatter said he also applied but has only heard back about files not received.

Brickman provided an update. Digital initiatives have been paused from retargeting and campaigns to social media and search-engine marketing. The messaging has shifted to prioritizing brand loyalty with the cancellations and postponement of events and conferences. Have been collaborating with Norman Chamber on messaging and sharing resources. Main priority was creating a restaurant list which displays to be granular, resourceful and organic by design to build brand loyalty during this crisis. Has also been talking to community partners, i.e., sharing posts from Cleveland County YMCA regarding workout-from-home options, and working on a weekly date-night digital project with local musician Michael Bendure to provide “live” music to go with delivery/carryout meal.

FY21 budget

Anthony Francisco provided an updated placeholder for the FY21 budgeting process of \$850K. The placeholder had already been reduced prior to the pandemic which is something on Schemm’s radar to explore with hotel partners in the future. He provided a line-by-line recap which included reductions from year prior. The total salary line is mirroring the FY20 expense. Departure of the visitors services specialist (effective March 20) was not adjusted but the position will not be replaced in the near future. Schemm did not balance the budget, totaling expenses of \$822,974. Allison suggested to balance it by adding the remainder between \$822K and \$850K as pandemic disaster contingency. Green asked about revenue for the visitors guide project and Schemm took out the goal of \$25K to show that the budget would remain less than the placeholder and the guide will have fewer pages and no ads for the 2020-21 project if needed. Hatter moved to approve the budget, Howard made the second and the motion carried. Next step will be for Schemm to send along to the City of Norman which will is typically voted by council in June.

Schemm also provided a parallel bare-bones budget as part of the “plan for the worst, hope for the best” scenario that would spend \$543K that will not be sent to the city but provided guidance for the board to see how expenses could be curtailed.

Norman Forward & Sports Commission update

Schemm said that in light of the pandemic crisis that discussions regarding Norman Forward progress and Sports Commission creation are on hold.

Partner updates

Compagni shared that as part of her Leadership Norman sessions, they heard from Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell and she will be imploring her circle that once the crisis has passed, the value of traveling in Oklahoma to support our travel and tourism counterparts. Kovalick thanked Schemm for his leadership and that within his company’s portfolio of hotel properties, 15 have closed their doors. Hall thanked Schemm and the staff for taking the lead on helping our community in recent weeks. Haws thanked the chamber for building resources and leading communication within the Norman business community. Zaver thanked Schemm for preparing the budget as he did. Earlier, Gillis shared that the NYSA recreation season will be canceled and that NYSA will be exploring some funding options.

Schemm indicated that the next meeting will be April 15 and within the shelter-in-place window set forth by the mayor so he will update as we get closer to the date.

Adjourned at 12:48 p.m.